

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** Urban Design Committee

**DATE, TIME AND**

**PLACE OF MEETING:** Wednesday, July 9, 2003, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS AND OTHERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Members:** Michael Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Third World Oforah, Dennis Scheer, Gordon Scholz, Scott Sullivan. Kim Todd absent.

**Others:** Dallas McGee (Urban Development); Debby Brehm and John Decker (Douglas Theatre Co.); Kelly Sieckmeyer and Ken Smith (Public Works and Utilities); Trevor Hull (Erickson Sullivan Architects); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

**STATED PURPOSE**

**OF THE MEETING:** Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

Mr. Scheer called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

### **Downtown Entertainment Center: Final Review of Conceptual Design**

Mr. McGee stated that they would like the Committee to give their recommendations on the facade itself. Mr. Sullivan stated that the intention is to have a public meeting in a couple of weeks. He then reviewed the cost estimates for the two schemes, which were Michael Bott's version and the Erickson Sullivan version. Hampton came up with a difference of \$511,000. Builders Inc. provided cost estimates for the Erickson Sullivan version, but not for the Michael Bott version. Hampton had a 1.25 cost on the Erickson Sullivan version, and Builders came in at 1.35. The small design group met regarding these numbers, and discussed how to make up the difference. They recognized that they want to look at material costs, particularly on the aluminum panel treatment versus the forms of the building, as the aluminum panels are a significant portion of the cost. Conceptually, they want to see a contrast between the traditional brick material, the concrete material, and a more contemporary aluminum panel. One option might be that the copper toned version remains aluminum panels and the white/buff tone changes to a large scale tile.

Mr. Scheer asked Mr. Sullivan if they are comfortable that there is enough space at the entrance to handle the amount of people that will come to the theater. Mr. Sullivan stated that they have brought this issue up on several occasions. Mr. Sullivan noted that one of the differences between the Starship and this theater is that the ticket booth for this theater is pulled back considerably farther from the doorway. They believe that it is a reasonable amount.

Mr. Sullivan then presented a proposed design of the sidewalk and dropoff lane plan. There will be no parking on P Street. He noted that the previous drawing showed a 16 foot double lane, and now they are proposing a 14 foot single lane of traffic. Mr. Eckert stated that he feels this is a great improvement and believes that it will function a lot better. Mr. Scheer asked Kelly Sieckmeyer to give his opinion on this subject. Mr. Sieckmeyer voiced his unofficial opinion that if they design for two moving lanes, they would be in the neighborhood of 16-18 feet. Mr. Sullivan also stated that he would like to see pylons at the entrance to and exhibit from the drop-off area. However, there has to be a 6 foot clearance from the side of the roadway to an obstruction, in particular if the obstruction is not a break-away type. Mr.

Oforah remarked that he does not understand the significance of showing something there and then making it appear that an individual could drive through it. He believes there should be some sort of curb. Mr. Sieckmeyer stated that you start with the simplest way of obstructing. If that does not work, then you look at a different approach.

Mr. Scheer agreed that it looks better than it ever has, although he is still not in favor of it. He noted that the reason that we are having this discussion is because we are developing a solution that violates typical pedestrian/vehicle zones. He added that his opinion is that the dropoff should occur where the curb is set and should not come in to the sidewalk zone. He understands that his opinion conflicts with certain needs. He agrees that because the pedestrian path is a straighter shot than in previous versions, it is much better. A question he has is if the width will be enough to accommodate the increased activity. Mr. Oforah still believes that there should be some sort of obstacle to protect the queuing there. Mr. Eckert stated that he believes the thing that is going to avoid the congestion is the fact that there is no curb. John Decker noted that the dropoff is crucial to them for the notion of being a grand theater, and if it goes down to 10 or 12 feet, it loses the character. Debby Brehm stated that their number one concern is the safety of individuals. Mr. Scheer stated that he does not disagree with the need for a dropoff, but he does not view this as a dropoff. His criticism is that if we can't do an actual dropoff, should we do this sort-of dropoff. Ms. Brehm noted that everyone has a different opinion of what a dropoff is, and they are concerned with the safety of individuals. Mr. Oforah again noted that he believes there should be a curb.

Mr. McGee noted that they want to take this to Randy Hoskins for his input on traffic considerations and then update this Committee again.

Mr. Eckert stated that he believes that we need to look at the \$135,000 gap for the facade treatments. Mr. Sullivan then pointed out the specific changes with the drawings on P Street. Ms. Brehm noted that the proposed drawing does not say 'movie theater', whereas the preliminary drawing did. Mr. Eckert commented that no one will ever have this view that we are seeing in the drawing. When you stand on the street, the entrance is evident on both the preliminary and proposed drawings. Mr. Oforah stated that he likes the arch on the preliminary drawing versus the angled parapet of the proposed drawing. Mr. Sullivan stated that the public comments favored the more asymmetrical drawing. Mr. Zimmer suggested that the proposed drawing creates a greater impact at the center.

Mr. Scholz asked if a study model has been done to help people visualize the three dimensional qualities. Mr. Sullivan stated that they considered modeling an eye-level perspective, but it is difficult for people to perceive this. Mr. Scheer commented that it will be difficult to perceive the model as it is a lot of rooftop.

Mr. Scheer commented on the budget in that he feels it is important for the City at some point to stand firm, and if additional money needs to be found, then we need to do that to maintain the integrity of the facade. He noted that this is an important building in downtown. Mr. McGee stated that this is a critical issue. They would like to see if there could be some savings in materials. Mr. Zimmer noted that they are trying to find ways to close the gap, but also to find good quality, durable, interesting substitutes. He stated that he believes closing the gap is achievable and we are on the right track to achieving that within the standards.

Mr. Decker asked if there is conflict with the art deco exterior and their interior design of doing a decadent 20's type feel inside. Mr. Zimmer commented that he feels you can have both as that is a traditional approach for movie theaters—interiors and exteriors often did not match. Mr. Eckert stated that he agrees with Mr. Zimmer, and added that they have a concern not only with the moviegoer but with the person walking on the street and with the visitor. He suggested that they continue to look at other materials. He stated that we need to be fiscally responsible because of the times that we are in. Mr.

Scheer stated that he agrees with being fiscally responsible, but added that there is also a responsibility to do this right. He believes that the gap can be closed, but if at some point, we close the gap as far as possible, then we need to find more money.

In conclusion, the Committee recognized significant progress in the design and responsiveness to previous discussions. Specifically, the Committee commends:

- The improvements in the P Street circulation plan (sidewalk and dropoff), which appears to offer a more functional dropoff lane and an improved pedestrian environment;
- The continued focus on reducing the impact of a “big box” through creative design;
- Preparing options for the P Street facade treatment. The Committee recognized that the “working design team” of City staff, the City’s design consultants, the developers, and the developers’ consultants would discuss both the “preliminary” (symmetrical) and “proposed” (asymmetrical) designs and that most likely only one of the designs will be offered at the next public design update. The Committee expressed to the “design team” a preference for the asymmetrical proposal, but also saw the earlier proposal as a viable solution.
- Efforts to close a funding gap without diminishing the quality of the exterior materials or design concept. The Committee especially emphasized the importance of continued focus on quality materials and design.

Mr. Scheer noted that he supports the proposed drawing. Mr. Eckert and Ms. Kissel stated that they agree. Mr. Oforah stated that he likes the arch of the entrance on the preliminary drawing and would like to see it incorporated in to the proposed drawing.

### **Design enhancements at intersection of Homestead Expressway and Capitol Parkway West (Dept. of Roads/Olsson Associates)**

Mr. Zimmer stated that the Department of Roads contacted him and stated that they wanted to correspond with the Committee rather than presenting information at the meeting today.

### **Staff report/miscellaneous**

Mr. Zimmer stated that he had received an application for a sidewalk café on 13<sup>th</sup> and Q for a short-order Mexican restaurant. The liquor license is for beer and margaritas only. There is a little variation from what has been seen before in that the railing material is 9 gauge wire, so it is a heavy screen rather than a railing system. Mr. Scheer stated that he feels the material is acceptable, and several other members agreed.

There being no further business, Mr. Scheer adjourned the meeting at 4:33 p.m.